

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

"Super Block" Rental Housing Survey

A CONSORTIUM PROJECT OF: Augsburg College; College of St. Catherine; Hamline University; Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs; Macalester College; Metropolitan State University; Minneapolis Community College; Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program; University of Minnesota (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service); University of St. Thomas; and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.

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**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**

"Super Block" Rental Housing Survey

Conducted on behalf of
North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation

Prepared by
Xuejin Ruan, Graduate Research Assistant,
University of Minnesota
August 2000

*This report (NPCR 1154) is also available at the following internet address:
<http://www.npcr.org>*

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Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization
330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center
301-19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: (612) 625-1020
e-mail: npcr@freenet.msp.mn.us
website: <http://freenet.msp.mjn.us/org/npcr>

Prepared for the North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation
by Xuejin Ruan

Graduate Research Assistant
Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

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Executive Summary

The Phalen Village Small Area Plan contains some recommendations about the renovation of Super Block, a small area comprised of 38 rental apartments. However, due to little communication and understanding of this area, no practical and comprehensive strategies have been created yet to implement the previous recommendations.

North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation (NENDC), a community based development corporation plays an important role in the redevelopment of the Phalen Village area. The NENDC board decided it was time to compile the information needed to help implement the Phalen Village Small Area Plan which included the Super Block. A survey on the apartment residents was conducted to establish a profile of the residents, including who they are, what they need and their homeownership possibilities.

According to the results of the survey and interviews with resource people, this research report describes the ethnicity, gender and economic condition of the residents, while exploring the residents' feelings about their community. Based on the survey, a general picture of the residents' needs, including the needs for the children, youth and adults, is also presented. Strategies for further planning, revitalization and development may be generated based on the above information.

Based on the residents' response as well as their actual situation, this report also examines the home ownership possibilities of the residents. Due to the tight real estate market, the residents' weak purchasing power as well as their lack of information, there is still a long way to go before most of the families realize their dreams of buying their own home.

Introduction

The area in the City of Saint Paul called the Super Block is bounded on the north by Maryland Avenue, on the south by Magnolia Avenue, on the west by Barclay and on the east by Hazelwood. There are 38 buildings that were constructed in the 1960's. Each building has 12 units with a total of 456 units in the 2½ block area and within a land space of 13 acres resulting in an average of 33 units per acre. The deteriorated apartment complexes, its high density as well as the overall negative reputation of the Super Block have become an overwhelming blighting presence in the Phalen Village area.

The Phalen Village Small Area Plan was adopted by the Saint Paul City Council on December 6, 1995 and many of the plan's recommendations have been implemented. The plan included renovation recommendations of the Super Block. However, the community at large has had little communication and understanding of this area and its potential because of the multiple ownership there and its isolation from the community. These factors make it difficult to design a comprehensive strategy to improve this area.

According to the Phalen Village Small Area Plan, something should be done in this area in order to "reduce the density of apartment complexes to meet RM-1 zoning density standards wherever possible through unit configuration changes and removal" (The Phalen Village Small Area Plan) and to "improve housing maintenance; reduce the concentration of poor-quality, low income housing. Rehabilitate and remove apartment buildings to improve the residential environment, create relationships with open space and streets that help control crime and promote neighborhood stability." (Phalen Village Plan Implementation Progress Report, March 30, 2000).

The Saint Paul City Council has held several meetings on the Super Block issue, discussing ways to implement the recommendations for the area. The Board of Directors of the North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation (NENDC), a community based development corporation decided the time had come to begin a hands-on research project to study the Super Block in order to gather information needed for future implementation actions:

- 1) Profile and gather demographics on residents
- 2) Determine resident's needs
- 3) Present home ownership possibilities to the residents

NENDC applied for and was granted a grant to fund a Research Assistant to design and implement a survey during the three summer months of 2000. This report is the result of that effort which began early in June, 2000 and is submitted in its final form on August 25, 2000.

Methodology and Data Collection

To gather the needed information, the first step was to design a survey for the residents. Before deciding what should be included in this survey and how to implement the survey, the Research Assistant walked the Super Block area several times to inspect the buildings and to engage in conversation with residents living there. There were also meetings with resource people who know the area, such as the Director of the Crime Free Multi Housing Program of the Saint Paul Police Department, Ruth Ann Eide, apartment managers and other city staff.

It was quickly established that there is a great difference between the northern 12 buildings which are owned by nine different owners and the southern 26 buildings which are owned and managed by Bruce Realty, both in management/maintenance style and in property quality. After several discussions it was decided to differentiate between the two sets – the northern 12 and the

southern 26. In the description that follows, the terms "Northern Super Block" and "Bruce Realty" will be used.

In order to develop an accurate picture of the living conditions of the units and the make-up of the residents of the Super Block area and, also to make a comparative analysis, it was decided to also include in the survey 20 other apartment buildings that were either contiguous or close by. The responses from these buildings will be termed "Other". The 20 buildings are located north of the Super Block along Hazelwood and Herbert Streets and are regarded as generally well managed and acceptable within the larger community.

Thus, the study area includes:

Northern Super Block: 12 buildings, 144 units

1178 Barclay	1495 Rose	1501 Rose	1511 Rose
1510 Rose	1500 Rose	1494 Rose	1166 Barclay
1152 Barclay	1150 Barclay	1154 Barclay	1156 Barclay

Bruce Realty: 26 buildings, 312 units

1138 Barclay	1134 Barclay	1130 Barclay	1126 Barclay
1110 Barclay	1114 Barclay	1118 Barclay	1120 Barclay
1122 Barclay	1100 Barclay	1088 Barclay	1491 Magnolia
1499 Magnolia	1485 Magnolia	1495 Magnolia	1509 Magnolia
1505 Magnolia	1515 Magnolia	1535 Magnolia	1517 Magnolia
1519 Magnolia	1527 Magnolia	1525 Magnolia	1523 Magnolia
1529 Magnolia	1521 Magnolia		

Others: 20 buildings, 517 units

1124 Hazelwood	1126 Hazelwood	1136 Hazelwood	1142 Hazelwood
1144 Hazelwood	1252 Hazelwood	1260 Hazelwood	1264 Hazelwood
1266 Hazelwood	1286 Hazelwood	1288 Hazelwood	1263 Hazelwood
1265 Hazelwood	1275 Hazelwood	1281 Hazelwood	1283 Hazelwood
1291 Hazelwood	1293 Hazelwood	1239 Herbert	1619 Maryland

Before implementing the survey, the owners and or managers were called and a letter was sent to inform them about the project. It also asked for their cooperation and permission to distribute the questionnaires within the buildings. Also considering the large numbers of Hmong and Hispanic residents who may not be able to read English, cover letters and questionnaires were translated and prepared into Hmong and Spanish by NENDC staff.

The questionnaires were distributed door to door by NENDC staff. A stamped return address envelope was included to facilitate the return. Additionally, in order to garner attention of the residents, seven \$100 prizes from random drawings were offered. Each questionnaire and cover letter had an identical number in a series that could be matched when the drawings would take

place. Several flyers were posted on the door of each building to remind the residents to return the questionnaires.

The return rate of the questionnaires is shown in the following table:

Table 1 Rates of Return

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Number of questionnaires sent out	144	312	517
Number of questionnaires returned	48	78	178
Rate of return	33.3%	25.0%	34.4%

The rationale for the return rate is as follows:

- 1) There are illegal Hispanic immigrants living in both sections of the Super Block. It is typically extremely difficult to get involved in anything that is even remotely related to government.
- 2) Difficulty in communication: there are approximately 60 units in the Northern Super Block and in Bruce Realty that are occupied by residents who come from Asian countries such as Burma or from Viet Nam. They cannot speak, read or write in English and the NENDC staff's language proficiencies did not extend into these more remote language areas.

Research Findings

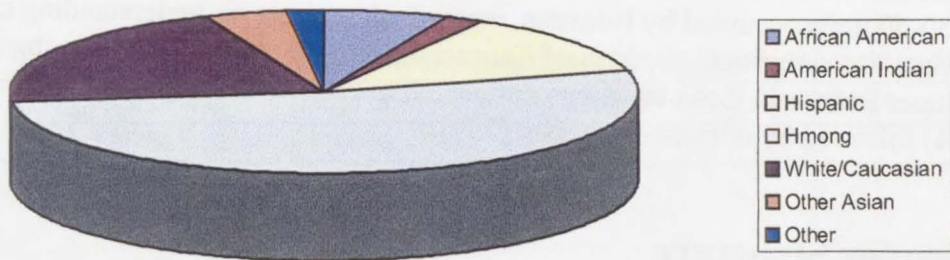
The Profile of the Residents

Ethnicity

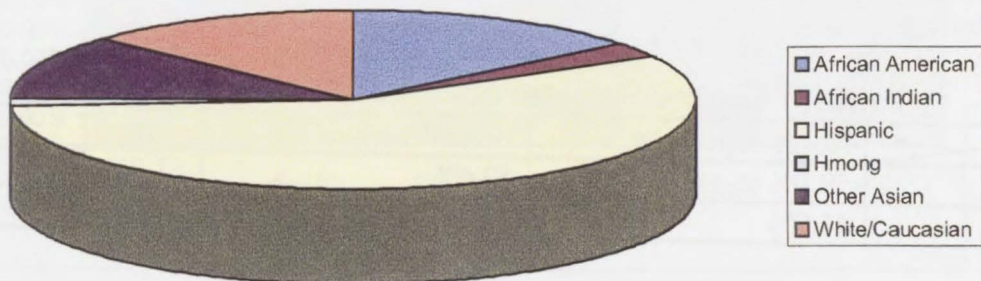
Table 2: The Ethnicity of the Residents

	African American	American Indian	Hispanic	Hmong	Other Asian	Caucasian (White)	Other
North Super Block	6.3%	2.1%	12.5%	52.1%	20.8%	4.2%	2.0%
Bruce Realty	14.3%	2.6%	57.1%	1.3%	11.7%	13.0%	0.0%
Others	33.3%	2.9%	6.3%	9.1%	2.3%	49.1%	0.0%

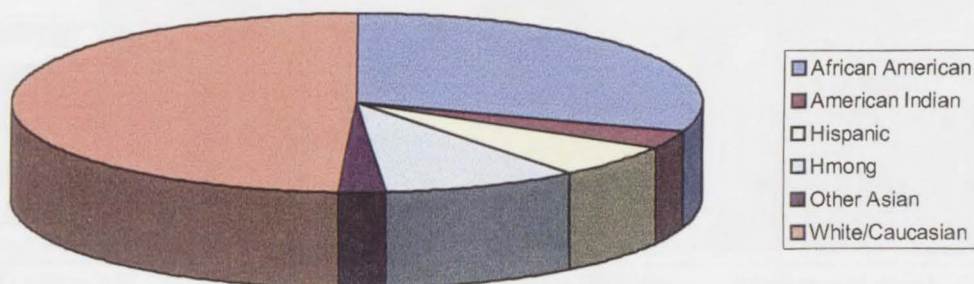
**Figure-1 The Ethnicity of the Residents
(North Super Block)**



**Figure-2 The Ethnicity of the Residents
(Bruce Realty)**



**Figure-3 The Ethnicity of the Residents
(Others)**



As shown in the above tables and figures, the major residents in the Northern Super Block are Hmong. Actually, the residents in 1495 Rose, 1501 Rose, and 1510 Rose are all Hmong as are

most of the residents in 1494 Rose. Other Asians include Vietnamese and Burmese. Most of the residents in 1178 Barclay are Hispanic. Other buildings have ethnic and racial mixtures. More than half of the residents in Bruce Realty are Hispanic. In the NENDC staffs' experience of going door to door as well as information that the Manager offered, it was determined there are approximately 50-60 units occupied by Burmese, most of whom have no understanding of English. There are also significant numbers of Caucasian and African-Americans living in this section of the Super Block. In those buildings designated as Others, the largest group is Caucasian (49%) followed by African-American (33%).

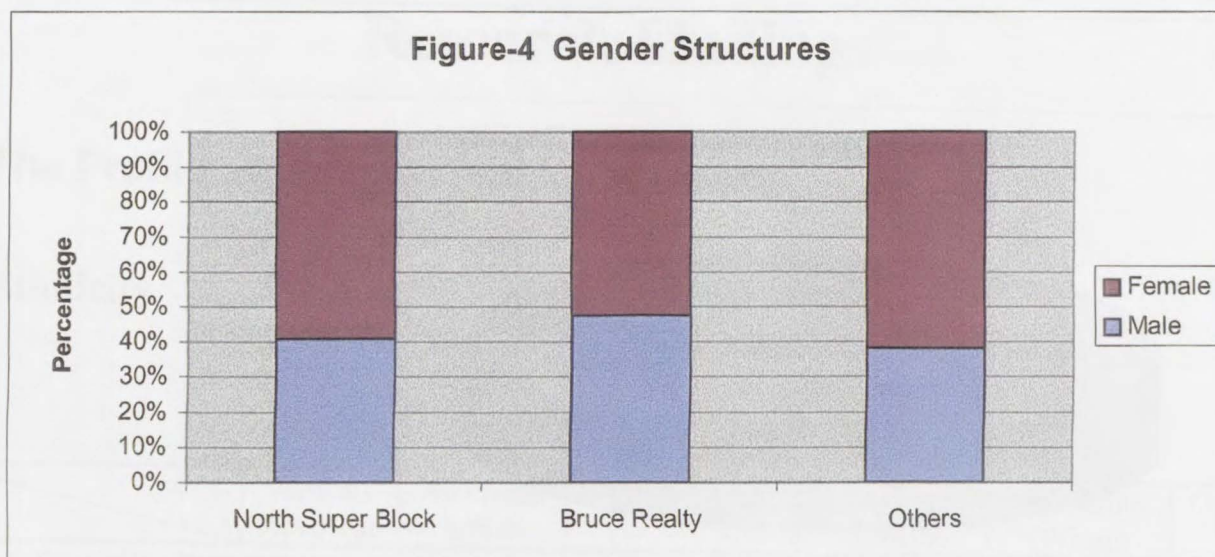
Age and Gender Structure

Not all the respondents answered the question regarding age and gender, so the sample may not be large enough to develop any definitive conclusions. However, the following information may be useful.

Gender Structures: According to those responses returned, the gender structure of the three areas is as followings:

Table 3 Gender Structures of the Three Areas

	North Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Female	59.0%	52.4%	61.8%
Male	41.0%	47.6%	38.2%



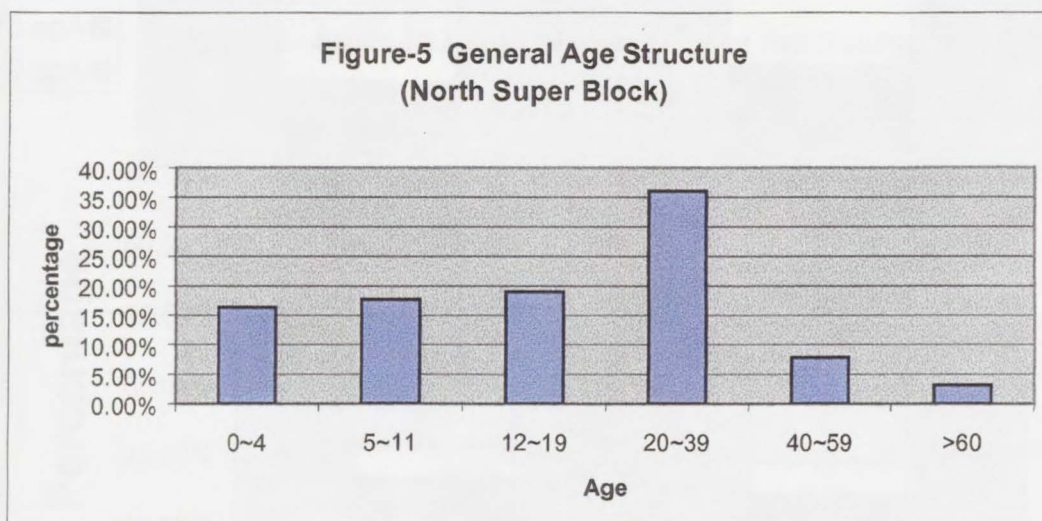
Female population outpaces male population in all three areas.

Age Structures

Northern Super Block

Table 5 Age Structure of the Residents in Northern Super Block

Age 0~4	Age 5~11	Age 12~19	Age 20~39	Age 40~59	>60 years old
16.3%	17.7%	19.0%	36.0%	7.8%	3.2%

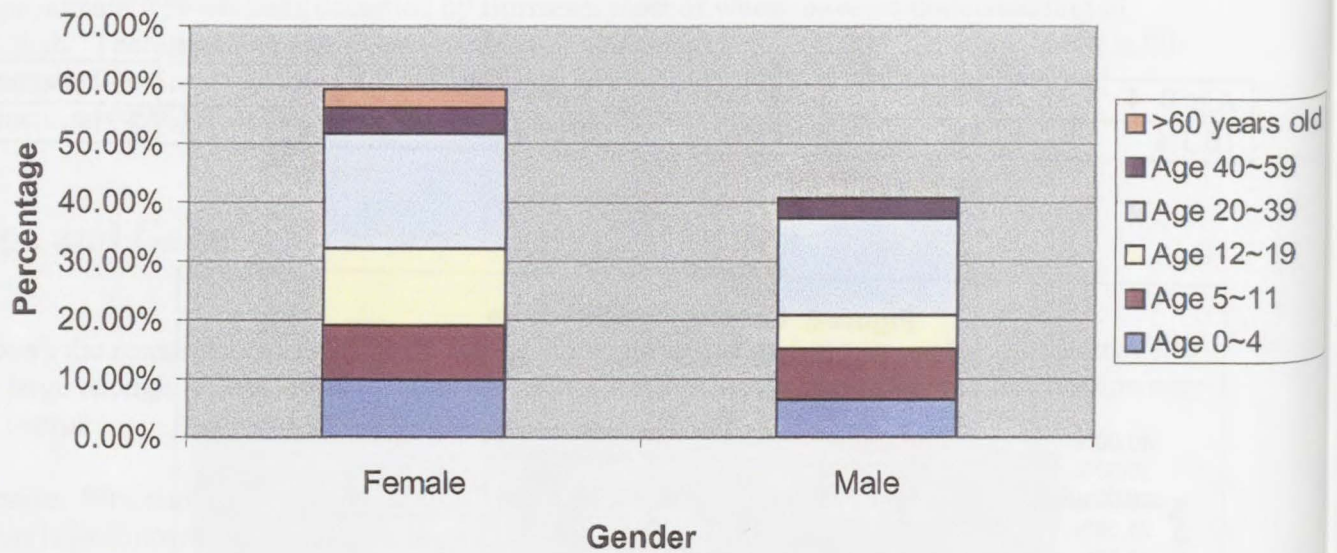


According to the above data, the percentages of children and adults up to age 40 predominate. The population of children under 4 is at 16.3% which could indicate that daycare might be needed. The gender breakdown is as follows:

Table 6 Age and Gender Structure of the Residents in Northern Super Block

	Female	Male	Total
Age 0~4	9.80%	6.50%	16.30%
Age 5~11	9.20%	8.50%	17.70%
Age 12~19	13.10%	5.90%	19.00%
Age 20~39	19.60%	16.40%	36.00%
Age 40~59	4.40%	3.40%	7.80%
>60 years old	3.20%	0.00%	3.20%

Figure-6 Age and Gender Structure of the Residents in Nothern Super Block



Bruce Realty

Table 7 Age Structure of the Residents in Bruce Realty

Age 0~4	Age 5~11	Age12~19	Age 20~39	Age 40~59	>60 years old
15.0%	16.1%	9.0%	46.8%	11.0%	2.1%

Figure-7 Age Structure of the Residents in Bruce Realty

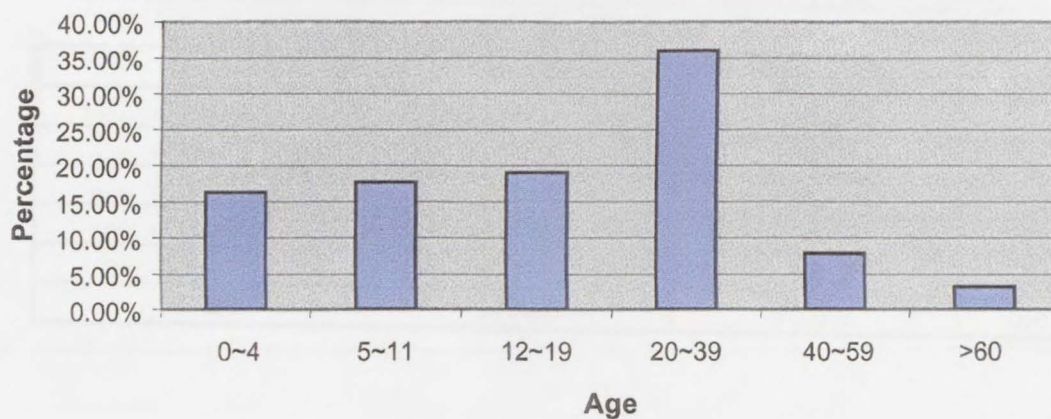
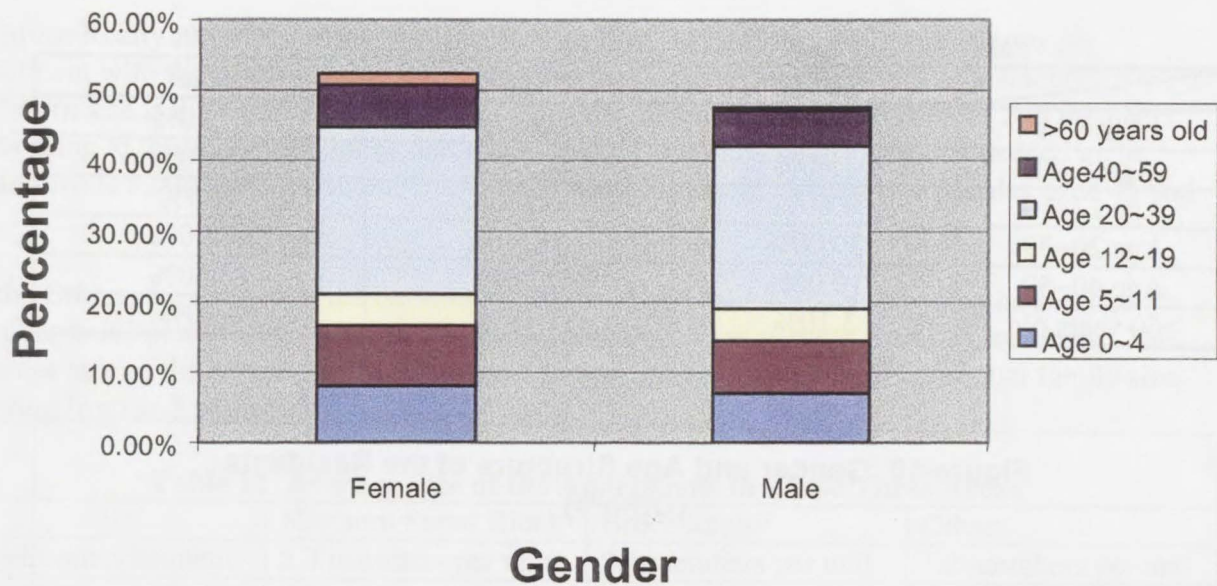


Table 8 Age and Gender Structure of the Residents in Bruce Realty

	Female	Male	Total
Age 0~4	8.00%	7.00%	15.00%
Age 5~11	8.60%	7.50%	16.10%
Age 12~19	4.50%	4.50%	9.00%
Age 20~39	23.70%	23.10%	46.80%
Age 40~59	6.00%	5.00%	11.00%
>60 years old	1.60%	0.50%	2.10%

Figure-8 Age and Gender Structure of the Residents in Bruce Realty



The population of working adults is prominent in the Bruce Realty percentages. Perhaps job training would be useful here.

Others

Table 9 Age Structure of the Residents (Others)

Age 0~4	Age 5~11	Age 12~19	Age 20~39	Age 40~59	>60 years old
17.1%	10.5%	7.8%	46.9%	13.5%	4.2%

Figure-9 Age Structure of the Residents (Others)

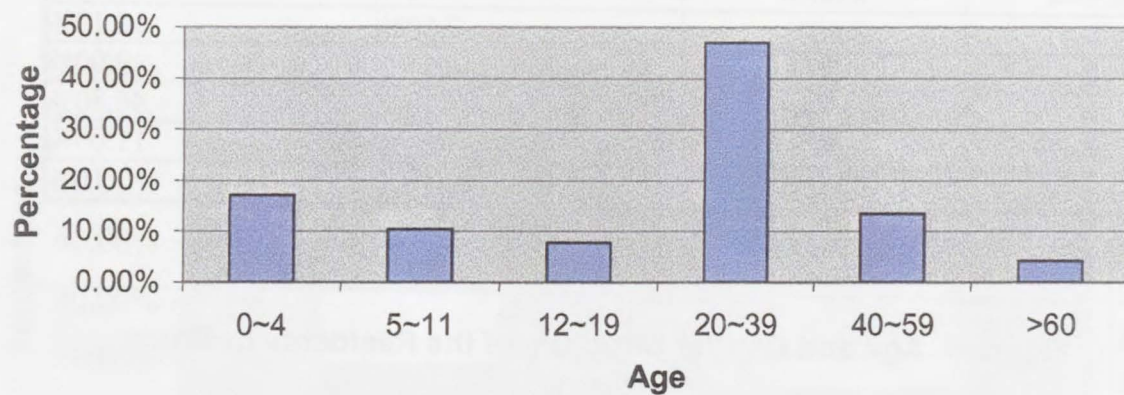
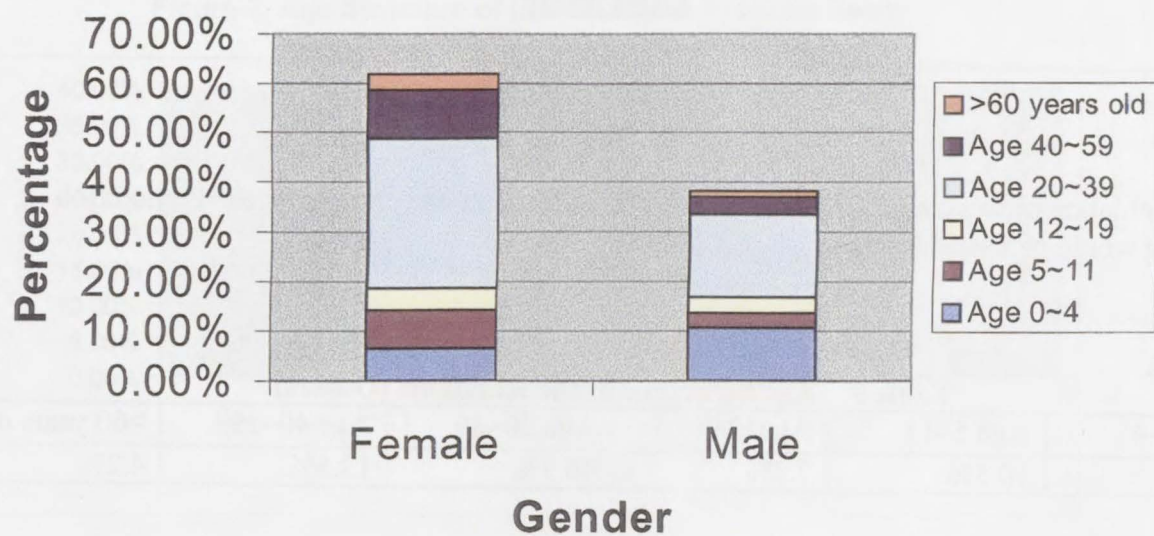


Table 10 Age and Gender Structure of the Residents in Others

	Female	Male	Total
Age 0~4	6.50%	10.60%	17.10%
Age 5~11	7.60%	2.90%	10.50%
Age 12~19	4.60%	3.20%	7.80%
Age 20~39	30.00%	16.90%	46.90%
Age 40~59	10.00%	3.50%	13.50%
>60 years old	3.10%	1.10%	4.20%

Figure-10 Gender and Age Structure of the Residents (Others)



Density

The Northern Super Block and Bruce Realty units are overcrowded to some extent based on the questionnaires that were returned. In the Northern Super Block, the number of residents in a 1-bedroom apartment vary from 1~6 members with an average of 2.3 members per unit. The average for a 2-bedroom unit is 4.2 members. The largest number is 9 with 4 females aged 48, 18, 17, 14 and 5 and males aged 50, 26, 22 and 16. (This family could well utilize a four bedroom house.) There are also 2-bedroom units with 7 or 8 members per unit. Commentary on returned questionnaires indicated that these larger families should move out of the Super Block or spread themselves across several households.

In Bruce Realty, the average number of residents for a 1-bedroom unit is 2.4 persons per apartment with the range varying from 1~4 members. The average number of residents for the 2-bedroom size is 3.9 persons per household with the individual size varying from 2~6 members. According to those questionnaires that were returned, a typical family unit that needed more bedrooms is a family with 6 members, 4 males aged 57, 20, 15, 14 and two females aged 41 and 10.

In the Others, the density of the buildings is lower. For 1-bedroom apartments, the average number is 1.2 persons per apartment with the individual sizes varying from 1~3 members. The average size of the 2-bedroom apartments is 2.75 members per unit with individual family size varying from 1~5 members.

Table 11 Average Size of the Apartments in These Three Areas

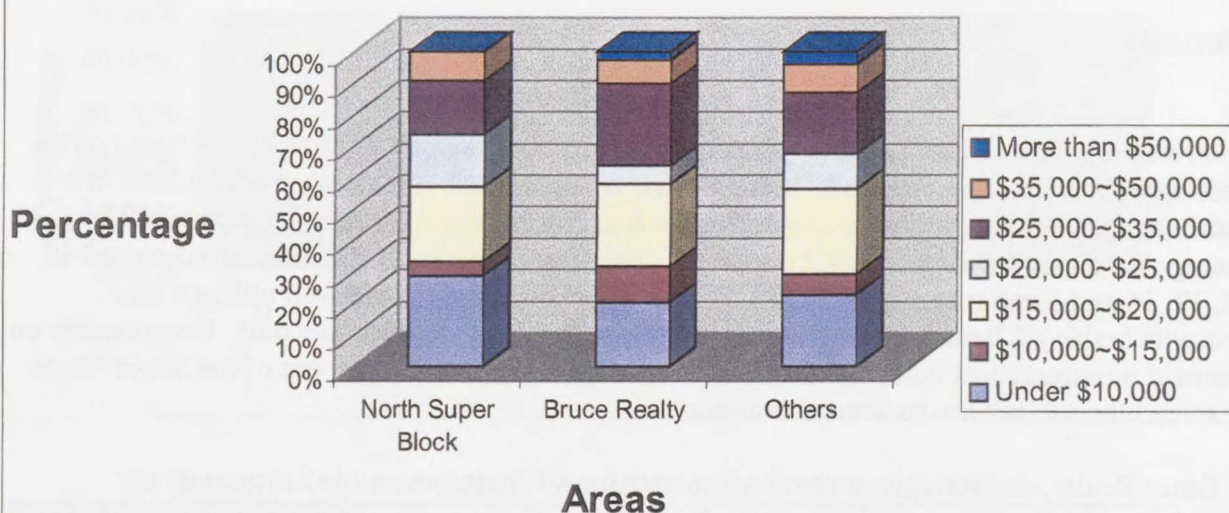
	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
1 bedroom apartment	2.3 members per unit	2.4 members per unit	1.2 members per unit
2-bedroom apartment	4.2 members per unit	3.9 members per unit	2.75 members per unit

Income Level

Table 12 Income Level in These Three Areas

	North Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Under \$10,000	28.6%	20.3%	22.9%
\$10,000~\$15,000	4.8%	11.6%	6.3%
\$15,000~\$20,000	23.8%	26.1%	27.4%
\$20,000~\$25,000	16.7%	5.8%	10.9%
\$25,000~\$35,000	16.7%	26.1%	19.4%
\$35,000~\$50,000	9.4%	7.3%	9.1%
More than \$50,000	0.0%	2.8%	4.0%

Figure-11 The Income Level of The Three Study Areas



According to the returned data, the general economic situation of the residents in all three of the residential areas is not high. An explanation of the high percentage of income under \$10,000 in "Others" may be for the following reasons: 1) there are quite a few Section 8 people living in "Others". According to the city's figures, there are 70 units in this area designated Section 8 and that is almost 13.5% of the total population in this area. 2) Additionally, there are also single parent families residing here. The response to Question 6B indicates that 24.2% of the respondents in this area are single mothers with children. There are also single women living in this area who may be working at lower paying jobs.

In the Northern Super Block and in Bruce Realty there are 37 units (8.1% of the total units) occupied by Section 8 holders. The overwhelming amount of immigrants living in the three areas and who have significant language problems would result in a distinct disadvantage in the job market and in their income.

The Physical Condition of These Three Areas

The twenty buildings that are classified in "Others" are managed and maintained by seven different owners. Most of the buildings have been renovated recently and are in acceptable condition. They can be regarded as a desirable habitation and are well maintained.

The 26 buildings of Bruce Realty also have experienced great change in the past ten years. According to the Manager as well as some residents who are still living there, the management of Bruce Realty was not granted too much credit ten years ago and there was a vacancy rate as high as 60% at times. Beginning eight years ago, Bruce Realty participated in training by the Saint Paul Police Department's Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and terminated the leases of

people involved with a criminal record. Beginning six years ago they have invested large amounts of funding and management effort to improve their properties. There are currently eight caretakers.

The complex is becoming more desirable. Flower baskets hang at the door entrances. Bright colored flags fly from standards and show the management's commitment to a well-organized and maintained complex. Maintenance workers were in evidence whenever the NENDC staff visited the complex doing such necessary routine jobs such as cleaning, watering the flowers or lawns, or hauling away trash. A plumber visits on a weekly basis. However, several of the buildings along the northern edge are in only fair condition both inside and outside. Even though there is still much to improve, the Bruce Realty buildings are evolving into an attractive complex and the vacancy rate is at zero.

The northern 12 buildings that are owned by 9 different owners are a different situation. Several of the buildings are in a livable condition and are taken care of by the owners. However, most of the buildings are in fair condition at best or in poor condition and they do not appear to be managed well or taken care of at all. Included in the Appendix are descriptions about the physical condition of each individual building. The buildings are still solid and are worth being cared for. Due to the lack of maintenance overall, most of the buildings are undesirable. Parking spaces and public areas are messy and dirty. More than half of the buildings have stained carpeting and broken windows or screens.

When one queries why a manager or owner would not maintain their properties to maximize their investment an article in the "Saint Paul Pioneer Press" presents one answer: "Twin Cities apartment rents are rising faster than in any previous years; at the same time the region is posting one of the lowest vacancy rates in the nation – possibly the lowest." (Tuesday, June 13, 2000) In 1997 the average monthly rent was \$611, in 1998 it was \$656 and in 1999 it had reached \$666. Now in 2000 it is at \$742 on average. Further, "affordable housing is becoming scarce in the Twin Cities area because little new rental housing is being constructed when the vacancy rate is below 2%. The housing industry considers a 5% vacancy rate full occupancy". And to return to the question above, "(It) is a landlord's market. If you have a good one, you're fortunate. If you don't, you know it. When you complain about your kitchen, you're told someone on the waiting list might like it better". Under such circumstances, irresponsible owners or managers will have no urgency to invest either money or energy to maintain their property.

What are their needs?

The residents' feeling about their habitat

The image of the Super Block throughout the East Side is not positive. Although the staff at Bruce Realty have worked hard to make their units well managed they still find they face an uphill battle to dispel the myths about the Super Block. A survey question approaches this image head on – why did the resident decide to rent their apartment? The most popular response was

“difficulty in finding an appropriate apartment somewhere else”. Given the tight rental market the residents, especially immigrants, have no choice. In the responses of those living in the “Others” category, the major reasons given are “I can afford the rent” and “I like the apartment”. Others specified that they rent their apartments because “pets are allowed” or because they are in the Section 8 program and they have limited choices.

Table 13 Why the Residents Decided Renting their Apartments (multiple choices)

Reason	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
I can afford the rent	51.1%	22.7%	68.6%
The location is near where I work or where kids go to school	17.8%	36.0%	24.0%
Relatives or friends are living close by	22.2%	29.3%	15.4%
I like the apartment	22.2%	34.7%	45.7%
Difficulties in finding an apartment somewhere else	53.3%	40.0%	28.6%

Figure-12 The Reason People Rent the Apartments (North Super Block)

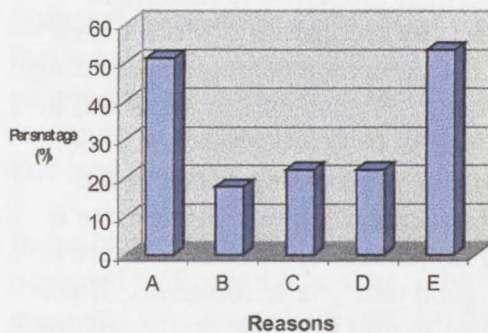


Figure-13 Reason Why Renting the Apartments (Bruce Realty)

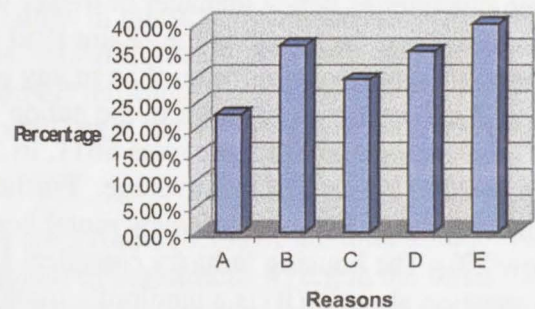
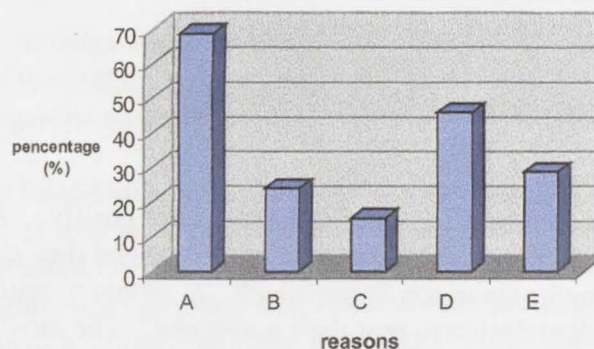


Figure-14 Reasons Why Rent the Apartments (Others)

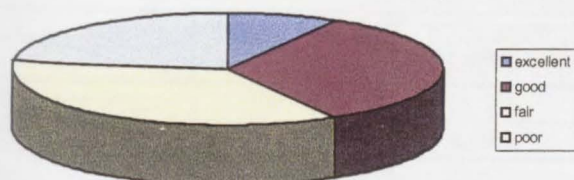


More than 58% of the residents in the Northern Super Block regard their unit as “fair” or “poor”. However, almost 58% in Bruce Realty regard their unit as “good” or “excellent”. In “Others”, more than 68% of the residents like their unit and regard them as “good” or “excellent”.

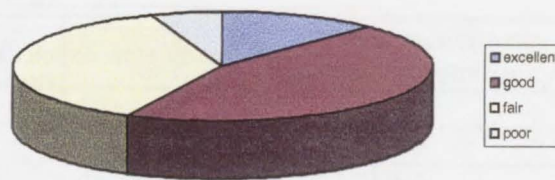
Table 14 How the Residents Like their Apartments

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Excellent	8.3%	12.3%	12.9%
Good	33.3%	45.2%	55.6%
Fair	35.4%	37.0%	24.7%
Poor	23.0%	5.5%	6.8%

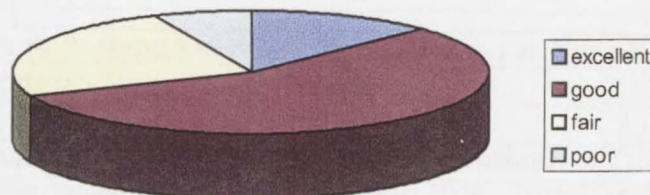
**Figure-15 How do you like your apartment
Northern Super Block**



**Figure-16 How do you like your apartment
Bruce Realty**



**Figure-17 How do you like your apartment
Others**



However, the response to the question, “how do you like your neighborhood” reveals a reverse scenario.

Table 15 How the Residents Like their Neighborhood

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Excellent	10.6%	8.3%	5.8%
Good	25.5%	51.4%	32.2%
Fair	31.9%	36.1%	39.1%
Poor	32.0%	4.2%	22.9%

Figure-18 How do you like your neighborhood
Northern Super Block

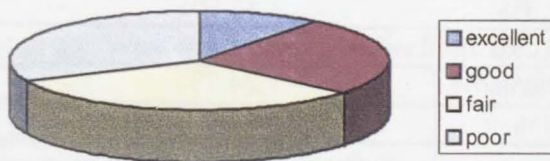


figure-19 How do you like your neighborhood
Bruce Realty

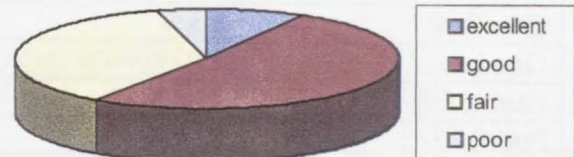
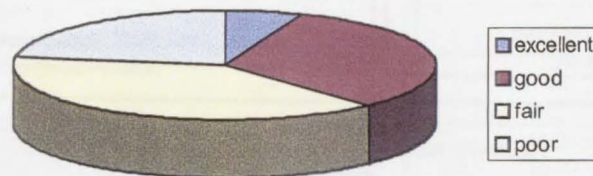


Figure-20 How do you like your Neighborhood
Others



Approximately 64% of the residents in the Northern Super Block do not like their neighborhood and regard it as "fair" or "poor". 50% of the residents here suggest that the crime rate is too high; 50% of them maintain that there should be more recreational facilities for children and also 31.3% of them think that the area is too crowded. They complain that the place is too dirty: "(t)he area around here has lots of dust and maybe pretty soon people will have lung problems." "Parking lots are not clear. Dirty – like living in Thailand." "This place is too noisy." One suggested, "How about weekend clean-ups for the area involving whole families in the community. Make it a requirement of living here."

About 40% of the residents in the Bruce Realty area are not satisfied with their neighborhood. 67.7% of all residents in this area insist there should be more recreational facilities for children. 32.4% have a desire to communicate with the larger community and 31% of them need accessibility to daycare, school and work.

The percentage of residents in "Others" show their dislike of their neighborhood at the rate of 62% -- almost as high as the percentage in the Northern Super Block and 63.6% of them

complain that the crime rate in their neighborhood needs to be urgently controlled. 48.2% suggest recreation facilities are needed for the children.

The above results not only reveal that there may be some potential problems in the "Others" area, but it also suggests that different people have different expectations regarding quality of life. It is important to take this aspect into consideration when engaging in future planning for this area. On the one hand, is it the responsibility of society to improve the habitat environment and quality of life of every community and on the other hand, does government need to set minimum acceptable standards regarding different social groups and different community cultures. "Affordability" and "acceptability" not only have economic meanings, but these concepts also have social and cultural meanings.

**Table 16 What Aspects do You Think Your Neighborhood Can Be Improved?
(multiple choices)**

	Density	Crime Rate	Accessibility to daycare, school and work	Recreation Facilities for Kids	Interaction with larger community
North Super Block	31.3%	50.0%	18.8%	50.0%	16.7%
Bruce Realty	17.7%	22.1%	30.9%	67.7%	32.4%
Others	21.6%	63.6%	23.5%	48.2%	21.6%

The concomitant problem of high density and over-crowdedness is the lack of related service facilities for the residents. In the Northern Super Block, 74.5% suggest there are not enough parking spaces and/or garages for their buildings. In Bruce Realty, the percentage is 56.0 and in "Others" the percentage is 63.4.

Table 17 Enough Parking Spaces and/or Garages for Your Building?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Yes	21.3%	44.0%	36.6%
Sometimes yes	4.2%	-	-
No	74.5%	56.0%	63.4%

Needs for Daycare

According to the returned questionnaires access to daycare is a concern in both the Northern Super Block and in Bruce Realty areas. In the Northern Super Block area, 28.3% of parents need daycare. However, 61.5% of the parents who need daycare do not have access to daycare. In Bruce Realty, the percentage of parents who need daycare is 28.4% and 66.6% of those who need daycare cannot gain access to it. The situation in "Others" is a little better with 20.8% needing daycare and only 31.9% not having access to it. It is safe to say that all three areas have the need to improve daycare services.

Table 18 Needs and Accessibility for Daycare

	Percentage of the households that need daycare (among all the parents living there)	Percentage of the parents that can't access to daycare (among all the parents that need daycare)
Northern Super Block	28.3%	61.5%
Bruce Realty	28.4%	66.6%
Others	20.8%	31.9%

Needs for Children and Youth

Overwhelmingly, when talking with those who are familiar with the living conditions in the Super Block, the need is stated for a children's playground. As the previous tables show, no matter whether one is in the Bruce Realty units, the Northern Super Block or in "Others", the percentage of the children and youth population is the dominant category. Nevertheless, except for a small playground contained within the Hazelwood Street Apartments (Apt# 1123, 1126, 1136, 1142 and 1144), there are no community playgrounds for children living in these areas. According to the returned responses, most of the children or youth have to spend their free time in their unit or they must travel to a park or public playground in the vicinity.

Table 19 Where and How do Your Kids Usually Spend their Free Time?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Stay at home	46.0%	63.8%	57.5%
Play with other kids in the neighborhood	27.0%	29.8%	10.0%
Go to the park or the public playground nearby	24.3%	49.0%	42.5%
Don't know	2.7%	4.3%	6.3%
Others	-	4.3%	-

More than 75% of the residents residing in both the Northern Super Block and at Bruce Realty suggest that there should be playgrounds for the children who live in the Super Block. Several residents specified that "we need a playground for the kids to play, to meet other kids". Still other residents suggest "we need some place for teens to hang out and to keep them out of trouble"; "there should be more sport events like volleyball, basketball or soccer."

In "Others", 79% of the residents also expressed a vote for a playground for children and youth. "There should be a place they can go to make things, have fun and be a part of something". They also suggested more activities are needed for children and youth, "activities where they are taught to get along, behave and not make trouble". Educational fun activities such as skating, swimming, karate, bowling, golf, et cetera were also suggested. A bike trail to Lake Phalen was also suggested by several residents.

Needs for Adults

Community Activities

More than half of the residents of the Super Block are immigrants. Most of them have some language difficulty. Language training programs are still needed. One resident from the Northern Super Block stated, "we need more communication between adults, language classes, computer classes, et cetera".

Activities that are helpful for the residents to get to know each other would be welcomed. A number of respondents mentioned, "community events, like a group meeting, social activities, neighborhood barbecue, et cetera for adults are needed." Some residents from the Bruce Realty area also suggested activities such as a card club, congregate dining, block parties and a neighborhood clean up. Residents from "Others" wrote down "a safe environment for singles to meet their neighbors", and "a group where people get together to talk and make new friends in the neighborhood".

Job Training

Useful job training programs would be welcomed. In the Northern Super Block, 36.6% of the households indicated a need for job training. The rate in Bruce Realty and in "Others" is 26.9% and 28.1% respectively.

Transportation

More than 70% of the households have their own car. Some of them use a friend's car or take the bus. Several indicated they get around by walking. On average 10% of the households mentioned they have some special transportation needs either for traveling to work or a disability.

Table 20 The Percentage of Residents That Have their Own Cars

	North Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Car Ownership Rate	75%	71.4%	66.9%
Special Needs for Transportation	10%	12.9%	11.8%

Home-ownership Possibility

During the survey, NENDC staff met a couple who have been living in the same apartment in Bruce Realty for 32 years and have never thought of changing their life style. Generally, however, most of the residents want to own their own home and they see it as a good investment and which can also "make people feel stable" according to one respondent. The 50/30 Plan¹ on Saint Paul's East Side (increase the percentage of thirty (430) years old homeowners to fifty (50)

¹ The 50/30 Plan was a joint initiative of the Urban Coalition and the Wilkins Center at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute for researching existing low home ownership rates in communities of color. Resource: <http://npcr.org/copc/reports/copc14/copc14.html>.

percent within the next twelve (12) years) also encourages people to buy their own homes. According to returned questionnaires, a large percentage of the tenants intend to buy a home in the future.

Table 21 Plans for Purchasing Own House in the Future?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Yes	66.6%	55.4%	75.7%
No	33.4%	44.6%	24.3%

Obstacles to homeownership

Due to the weak purchasing power of the tenants, their lack of necessary information for buying a home, and the tight real estate market, the dream of purchasing one's own house may not be fulfilled for everyone.

Lack of affordable housing

Shortage of rental units exist alongside high real estate prices. The median home sale price rose 8.1% from 1997 to 1998 and 6.3% from 1998 to 1999. Sale prices in the Twin City area grew so dramatically in 1999 that they outpaced even the best performing region in the country ("Star Tribune", February 11, 1999). According to the returned questionnaires, a significant number of respondents stated they had difficulties in finding appropriate homes within the price range of \$100,000~\$150,000. 15.6% of the respondents who made comments mentioned that they need help "to find affordable housing to purchase". One of the respondents said "...when new or remodeled homes are available or it is a HUD home, I feel it is really not for the poor. . .".

Low income level of the residents

As shown in Table 8, most of the tenants in all three areas are in the lower economic bracket which greatly decreases their purchasing power. 86.8% of the respondents in the Northern Super Block, 72.9% of those in Bruce Realty and 84.6% in "Other" have financial difficulty with home buying. When asked how much could they budget for a monthly mortgage payment only very few could afford \$1,000 or more as a monthly payment. But even more than that, the down payment appears to be a bigger obstacle for most of the respondents.

Table 22 How Much Could You Budget for a Monthly Payment if Buying a House?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Average	\$602.13	\$648.24	\$582.66
Lowest	\$200	\$100	\$100
Highest	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,500
\$700<=X<\$800	12.5%	6.4%	11.2%
\$800<=X<=\$900	4.2%	9.0%	7.9%
\$900<=X	6.3%	6.4%	2.8%

Table 23 What's the Bigger Obstacles for Home Buying?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Down Payment	61.1%	83.8%	69.2%
Monthly Payment	19.4%	6.5%	22.0%
Both	19.5%	9.7%	8.8%

Lack of knowledge of mortgage program

According to the respondents, almost 80% have no knowledge about programs that could help them with home buying. More than 70% would like to learn more. Training programs about home purchasing is necessary for residents in all three areas.

Table 24 Knowledge about Program Helpful for Home Buying?

	North Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Yes	20%	20.8%	20.5%
No	80%	79.2%	79.5%

Table 25 Would You Like to Learn More about the Mortgage Program?

	North Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Yes	78.6%	73.1%	75.6%
No	21.4%	26.9%	24.4%

Recommendations

For further research

NENDC plays an important role in the revitalization of Phalen Village by offering deferred loans for homeowners to improve their houses. NENDC also offers assistantship for local businesses. It is now beginning to address the needs of those residents who rent. The timing appears right to form partnership with the owners—where feasible—the CDC and government in order to create affordable and livable units.

The analysis in this report is based solely on the survey instrument. Quantitative large scale surveys always have a concomitant risk of obtaining synoptic but limited information and classifying all situations into pre-set categories; semi-structured interviews and small numbers of case studies may help to compensate for these limits. In further research, it may be useful to find more insiders and further interviews. If possible, some case studies would also be helpful. Further activity in the Super Block will not be possible without the participation of the owners and the managers. A meeting with owners could be the next step. An important issue in the Super Block is how to maintain and manage the property in order to satisfy minimum standards for affordable multi-housing and to improve the safety and livability of the neighborhood. This cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the owners and the managers.

For neighborhood action

Strategies for Community Renovation to Satisfy Residents' Needs

The residents' needs have been documented above. A practical plan of action is needed for further action to renovate this area:

- 1) **Neighborhood Clean Up and Appropriate Management.** It has been mentioned previously from outsiders, researchers and community members that a plan of action is needed to clean up the area especially the Northern Super Block. The owners/managers should be ascertained as to whether they are receptive and capable to be enlisted in this endeavor.
- 2) **Fostering a Sense of Belonging.** According to the returned questionnaires, not many residents in the Super Block actually like the area. When asked where they would like to locate their home if they were to buy one, very few people indicated that they would like their new home to be within one mile's distance of their current apartment.

Table 26 Where Would You Like Your House to be Located?

	Northern Super Block	Bruce Realty	Others
Here(within 1 mile)	6.7%	18.4%	7.1%
Nearby(within 5 miles)	23.3%	29.0%	34.0%
Somewhere else	70.0%	52.6%	58.9%

It appears that some residents living in the Super Block do not seem to care about anything or anybody around them. In the Northern Super Block, 29.2% of the residents have never gone to Lake Phalen or other recreation facilities nearby; in Bruce Realty, the percentage is 29.5% and in "Others", it is 42.7%. This lack of sense of belonging makes people more indifferent to their living area and results in them caring less about their environment. All of this engenders an ill circle and makes the overall area less desirable.

As lots of residents recommended, neighborhood activities, block parties, group meetings, collective clean-ups, et cetera can give people the chance to get to know their neighbors and foster positive feelings about their community. A well-managed community with an appealing physical condition will contribute to their identification with the community.

3) Building a Positive Image In the Area. Image is very important for the prosperity of a city, an area or a community. Positive image of a community not only can increase outside community members' interest in the community and the potential for them to become prospective members of the community but it can also strengthen the residents' sense of belonging and self identity. To build a better image of the community, efforts should be put into transfiguring the community's physical environment, improving the community's facilities, providing more opportunities for mutual communication and understanding, controlling community crime rates and improving overall community safety.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

1. How long have you lived here? ____ Years ____ Months
2. If new to St. Paul, from where did you come? _____
3. What made you decide to rent this apartment? (please check as many as apply)
 ____ I can afford the rent
 ____ The location is near where I work or where my kids go to school
 ____ Relatives or friends are living close by
 ____ I like this apartment
 ____ Difficulties in finding an apartment somewhere else
 Other reasons _____
4. Describe the unit in which you live:
 ____ 1 bedroom ____ 2 bedroom ____ 3 bedroom ____ 4 bedroom
5. How much do you pay for rent? Rent \$_____ Utilities \$_____
6. A. Including yourself, how many people live in your apartment? _____
 B. Please specify the age and gender of each member in your family

member	age	Gender (check)	
1		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
2		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
3		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
4		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
5		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
6		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
7		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
8		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male
.....		<input type="radio"/> female	<input type="radio"/> male

7. A. Overall, how do you like your apartment?
 ____ Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor
 B. Overall, how do you like your neighborhood?
 ____ Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor
8. How often do you use Lake Phalen and other recreation areas nearby?
 ____ times per week on average ____ not at all

9. Please check the aspects of how this neighborhood could be improved:

- ☐ Density
- ☐ Crime rate
- ☐ Accessibility to daycare, school and work
- ☐ Recreation facilities for the kids
- ☐ Interaction with larger community

Others, please specify: _____

10. Are there enough parking spaces and/or garages for your building?

☐ yes ☐ no

11. Please describe yourself?

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ White

- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Hmong
- ☐ Caucasian
- Other _____

12. A. How many members in your household are employed full time? ☐ persons
How many members in your household are employed part time? ☐ persons

B. Please describe your total household income:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 ~ 15,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15,000 ~ 20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20,000 ~ 25,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25,000 ~ 35,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35,000 ~ 50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 50,000 | |

13. How long do you plan to live here?

- ☐ years
- ☐ I will move as soon as I find somewhere else
- ☐ I don't know

14. A. Do you need daycare for your kids? ☐ yes ☐ no

B. Is daycare available for you? ☐ yes ☐ no

15. Where and how do your kids usually spend their free time?

- ☐ Stay at home
- ☐ Play with other kids in the neighborhood
- ☐ Go to the park or the public playground nearby
- ☐ Don't know

Other, please specify: _____

16. Please describe if your children have special or unique needs.

17. Do you feel there should be more activities for youth in your neighborhood?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify what kinds of activities are needed

18. Do you feel there should be more activities for adults in your neighborhood?
Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please specify what kinds of activities are needed _____
19. A. How do you usually get around? _____ own car _____ friends' car
_____ bus _____ walk
- B. Do you have any special needs for transportation?
_____ no _____ yes, please specify _____
20. A. Do you have plans for purchasing your own house in the future?
_____ yes _____ no
- B. If yes, where would you like your house to be located?
_____ here (within 1 mile)
_____ nearby (within 5 miles)
_____ somewhere else
21. What kind of difficulties or obstacles would you have for buying your own home?
_____ Financial difficulties
_____ Need information on mortgage program
Others, please specify _____
22. When considering the purchase of a house, which would be the bigger obstacle?
_____ Down payment _____ Monthly payment
23. How much could you budget for a monthly home payment? \$ _____
24. A. Do you know of programs that will help you with your home buying?
_____ yes _____ no
- B. Would you like to learn more?
_____ Yes, I am interested in some home-buying information program.
_____ No
- C. Are you interested in any job-training program?
_____ yes _____ no
If you are interested in a better job, please call 774-JOBS
25. Comments on this survey?
-

Appendix 2: Letter to Apartment Residents:

To apartment residents:

The North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation (NENDC) located at 1212 Prosperity Avenue, a community based development corporation providing loans both for housing rehabilitation and for small business development, asks your help in the ongoing redevelopment of the Phalen Village area. As part of our commitment to our service area, we are now conducting a survey about you – the apartment residents – in order to establish a profile of your needs, including recreation usage, public safety concerns, school and daycare access, shopping needs, job opportunities and home ownership possibilities.

Your participation in this project is vital. This is also a precious opportunity to get your voice heard by filling out the questionnaire. The information gathered by the survey will help us become better acquainted with residents in our area and help us work out better ways to serve our community according to your needs. All the information gathered will be demographic and no names will be necessary. If you need more information, please call us at 771-6955.

To show our thanks for your time and your help, we will enter all completed surveys into a drawing for seven prizes.

The seven winners will be granted \$100 each

Be sure and KEEP this letter and the Qualifying Number in the upper right hand corner to claim your prize at NENDC on August 15th, 2000.

Thanks again for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Carrie Wasley
Director

Xuejin Ruan
Research Assistant

Appendix 3: Description of Physical Conditions of 12

Buildings in Northern Super Block

1, 1178 Barclay St.

- No manager or caretaker living on site. No parking lots (on road parking).
- Most of the residents are Hispanic.
- Some litter in front of the door. Hallway window is slightly broken. Some screens missing or broken. Hallway messy and some carpet stained.
- Positive aspect: there is some picture showing the fire exit in the corridor.
- Generally condition: Fair.

2, 1495, 1501, 1511 Rose Ave. E.

- All the residents in 1495 Rose Ave. and 1501 Rose Ave. are Hmong. There are lots of kids there, and most of the units are over-crowded (lots of households have 4 kids or more. Most of the kids are running on the streets, or playing with mud.
- The three buildings share one parking lot. But the parking lot is littered with trash, not pleasantly.

1495 Rose Ave. E.

- All the residents are Hmong.
- Broken and missing floor tile. Hallway dark and littered, carpet old and stained. No carpet on the first floor. Broken hallway lights. Broken windows, loosen screen and dirty glasses. Trashes litter all over.
- Generally condition: poor/fair.

1501 Rose Ave. E

- Some screen need replacing, some litter, poor lighting, missing light bulbs. Not smells well. One used refrigerator on the third floor hallway.
- **No fire extinguisher on any floors.**
- Brisk and stucco are in good condition.
- General condition: fair/poor.

1511 Rose Ave. E

- The residents in 1511 Rose Ave. are diversified, including White, African American, Hispanic, Hmong. The manager of these three buildings is living in this building.

- Some green spaces in front of the building with some BBQ tables. Carpet looks better than the other two buildings but still not very clean. Some broken screens. No fire extinguisher on the first floor.
- Building is in good condition.
- General condition: OK.

3, 1510 Rose Ave. E.

- Caretaker is living on site, but we have never got the chance to meet him/her. All the residents in this building are Hmong.
- No carpet on the first floor, doors old, floors dirty.
- General condition: fair.

4, 1500 Rose Ave. E.

- Can not find the phone# of either the manager or the owner. We had a talk with the caretaker, that Hmong lady seemed reluctant to give us any information about the owner or the manager
- One window is slightly broken. Hallway carpet stained, used A/C in the hallway. Enter way need repair.
- Generally condition: fair/OK.

5, 1494 Rose Ave. E.

- Most of the residents are Hmong.
- Smells terribly. Garbage in the hallway, dark hallway, stove sitting outside in the yard. Broken screens. No carpet, dirty floor.
- General condition: poor.

6, 1166 Barclay St. 1152 Barclay St.

- There's no manager or caretaker living on site.

1166 Barclay St.

- The residents include Hmong, Hispanic and American.
- Brick and stucco building appears to be in good shape.
- Carpet old and a little bit stained, but relatively clean, need grasses cut.
- Generally condition: OK.

1152 Barclay St.

- Residents including Hmong, Hispanic and American.
- Stained carpets, some screens need to be fixed; some high glasses need to be cut.
- Generally fair/OK.

7, 1150 Barclay St.

- Residents include Hmong, Hispanic and American.
- There is a caretaker living on site. The building is relatively clean.
- Generally condition: OK.

8, 1154 Barclay St.

- The residents are mainly Spanish and American.
- No carpet on the first floor. Not smells well. Doors are old.
- Generally condition: fair.

9, 1156 Barclay St.

- The residents includes Hmong, Hispanic and American.
- No carpet on the first. The carpet on the second and third floor is old and not very clean.
- Generally condition: fair.

Notes: The most severe problem in this area is not that most of the buildings are falling down, but that most of the 12 buildings including the parking lots or the public spaces in the area are dirty. Trashes are littered everywhere. The whole area needs be to clean up. Density is also a severe issue.
